DRAGONAR
ACADEMY
12
ART BY
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STORY BY
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WHAT IN THE WORLD ...?!
SHE'S A MAE-STRO ?!
HOW IS THAT POSSI-BLE?!

Chapter LV
The Ansullivan 500-Year Festival ②

Chapter LV

The Ansullivan 500-Year Festival ②

ECO...
IS... IS THIS DRAGON ...?
MM-HMM. THIS IS STILL BRIGITTE.
B-BUT WHY DOES SHE SUDDENLY LOOK LIKE A MAESTRO?!
BECAUSE SHE IS A MAESTRO NOW! I'M NOT TOTALLY SURE HOW IT HAPPENED, BUT...
JUST BEFORE THAT ATTACK HIT HER...
I...I FELT LIKE I SOMEHOW CONNECTED TO THE CIRCUIT OF THIS LITTLE ONE'S ASTRAL FLOW.

OH, CRAP, MY STAR MARK! IT'S GONE!!!
IT'S GONE!
YIKES --!!!

HUH ...?
IF THAT'S TRUE, DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE A DRAGONAR NOW?
W-WELL, I'D BE OKAY WITH THAT...
HEH, HEH!

EXCEPT YOU DON'T HAVE A STAR MARK ANYMORE.
.....

AND THEN A SECOND AGO IT GLOWED AND VANISHED!

I FELT IT! I FELT BRIGITTE EVOLVING INTO A MAESTRO! AND...AND SOMETHING THAT FELT LIKE ECO'S MAGIC...!

WHAT'RE YOU BABBLING ABOUT, RAYMOND? LIKE THAT'S EVEN POSSIBLE!
AND QUIT FLASHING EVERYBODY, NO ONE WANTS TO SEE THAT.
BUT...BUT IT'S TRUE! MY STAR MARK'S ALWAYS BEEN ON MY LEFT SIDE...

UH-HUH.
IT'S GOT TO BE RAYMOND'S. IT JUST SORT OF APPEARED IN MY HAND BEFORE I KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING.
IS THIS LIGHT A STAR MARK ...?!
ECO ...!!
GLOW
THAT MEANS BRIGITTE'S TRANSFORMATION DID HAVE TO DO WITH YOUR POWER, HUH?
I THINK SO.
WHEN I CONNECTED WITH HER, I MUST'VE UNCONSCIOUSLY INFUSED HER WITH MY MAGIC...
BE-CAUSE... I THOUGHT ...
THAT I HAD TO PROTECT YOU, ASH...!!

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE HOW COOL YOU LOOK NOW!!!
AND THANK YOU, TOO, BRIGITTE!
ECO...
THANK YOU.
GRRRAAAAAAR!!
YOU EVOLVED A BORROWED DRAGON INTO A MAESTRO, HMM?
I THOUGHT YOU TWO WOULD HAVE SOMETHING OUTRAGEOUS UP YOUR SLEEVE-- AND I WAS RIGHT!
ALL RIGHT!
THANKS FOR WAITING, REBECCA! READY FOR OUR COUNTER-ATTACK?!

ALL RIGHT ...!!
I'M GONNA PUT UP A FIGHT TO MAKE THE STUDENT COUNCIL PROUD!!!
BWAA
AND I'M GLAD YOU DID!
ALL OUR ASSEMBLED GUESTS WERE PRESUMABLY HOPING TO SEE A BATTLE BETWEEN DRAGONARS! LET'S INDULGE THEM, SHALL WE?!
YEEEEAAAH!!!

VWOOOFF
CLASH
HOW-EVER...
HER TRANSFOR-MATION INTO A MAESTRO MEANS THAT...
HER AGILITY IS MASSIVELY IMPROVED--NO SURPRISE THERE!
SHOVE
IT'S NOWHERE NEAR ENOUGH TO MAKE UP FOR OUR DRAGONS' DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF COMBAT EXPERI-ENCE!!
GRRUUU!!

SHE'S ...
SHE'S HOLDING HER GROUND?! BUT HOW?!
GRM GRM
TROM

THERE'S SO MUCH EXCITEMENT SURGING THROUGH HER AS SHE STEPS INTO THIS THRILLING NEW WORLD.
WHAT --?

YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THE MASSIVE DIFFERENCE IN COMBAT EXPERI-ENCE...
BUT BRIGITTE IS IN IMPOSSIBLY HIGH SPIRITS!!

IT'S INCREDI-BLE!!
I CAN FEEL HER HEART POUNDING, AND ALL THE NEW STRENGTH FLOWING THROUGH HER!!

THAT DRAGON'S JOY, ANGER, OR SUFFERING...!!
IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT MANIPULATING OR CONTROLLING A DRAGON. IT'S THAT YOU CAN FEEL AND MAKE USE OF...

AHH, I SEE NOW.
THAT'S WHERE YOUR ABILITY TO RIDE ANY DRAGON COMES FROM, HMM?

FOR HOW FULLY YOU UNDERSTAND THEM.
I CAN'T HELP ENVYING THEM...

!!
LET'S GO, BRIGITTE!
SHINY SILVER LIGHTNING BLAST!!

OH NO...!!
CÚCHU-LAINN!
PUT UP YOUR HEXA-GON SHIELD!!
THOOM
GUURRAAAHHH!
NNGH...
UGH...!

LOOK AT THAT...!
REBECCA AND CÚCHULAINN ARE BEING PUSHED BACK!
WOW, ASH REALLY IS AMAZING!
OOOH!
DO YOU THINK HE CAN ACTUALLY BEAT HER?!
HEH! I FEEL A BIT SAD FOR MYSELF, BUT...
AS YOUR FRIEND, I'M REALLY HAPPY FOR YOU, ASH.
HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PULL THIS OFF!!
.....
WE JUST HAVE TO KEEP THIS UP, ASH!
YEAH! RIGHT NOW I FEEL LIKE WE'RE *INVINCIBLE*, EVEN AGAINST THE *SCARLET EMPRESS* --!!!

ALL I CAN THINK IS HOW STRONG YOU'VE BECOME.
LISTENING TO YOU, ASH...
SHWF
THAT'S SOME ADMIRABLE CONFIDENCE, ASH. BUT I THINK IT'S TIME WE WRAP THIS UP.
SAME TO YOU!

THAT YOU MIGHT DISPLAY YOUR ULTIMATE POWER, GAE BULG!!!
Suuu
I IMBUE YOU WITH ALL MY MAGIC...

VWMMMM
CUT DOWN EVERY-THING IN YOUR PATH!!
WITH ALL THAT WE ARE, HERE AND NOW, I IMPLORE YOU...
ALL MY WILL AND MY STEED'S STRENGTH ...

WHEEL OF FOR-TUNE!!
VUURRR
EXCALIBUR!!!
OHHHMMMMM

DWOHMM
YE AA AA H!
HA AA HH HH ....!!
SHRM
MY MAGIC...
IS BEING CON= SUMED .....!!
EXCALIBUR IS...
MORE POWERFUL THAN I EVER IMAGINED...!

YE AA AA H!
HA AA HH HH ...!!

DWOHMM
SHRM
MY MAGIC...
IS BEING CONSUMED ...!!!
EXCALIBUR IS...
MORE POWERFUL THAN I EVER IMAGINED...!

WE CAN BOTH SEE HOW THIS IS GOING TO END!
I... I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!
CON-CEDE! PLEASE !!!
RE-BECCA!
YOUR KINDNESS IS YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH AND GREATEST WEAK-NESS!
UNTIL YOU CHANGE THAT, YOU DON'T HAVE A CHANCE OF BEATING OSCAR!!!
DON'T YOU DARE GO EASY ON ME, ASH!
REBECCA'S BEEN ATTACKING IN BRIEF, QUICK BURSTS-- NOTHING LIKE HER USUAL TACTICS!
THAT EXPLAINS WHY I'VE BEEN FEELING UNEASY ABOUT THIS WHOLE BOUT!
HUH? OSCAR ...?
OH!

BY DOING THAT, REBECCA'S BEEN SHOWING ME HOW IT'D FEEL TO FACE OSCAR IN COMBAT.
SHE'S BEEN SIMULATING THE ARROWS OSCAR FIRES FROM HER BOW!
I GET IT NOW!!
SHE NEVER HAD ANY INTENTION OF...
"I HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF ANYTHING YET."
"WHAT I'LL WANT IF I WIN?
AND THAT MEANS...
TRYING TO TRAIN ME...?!
SHE'S BEEN...
ASH !!
SUR-PASS ME ...!!!

AND NEVER FORGET...
ATTAIN HEIGHTS BEYOND ANYTHING EVEN I CAN REACH!
ALLOWED TO EVER SURPASS ME!
THAT YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE...

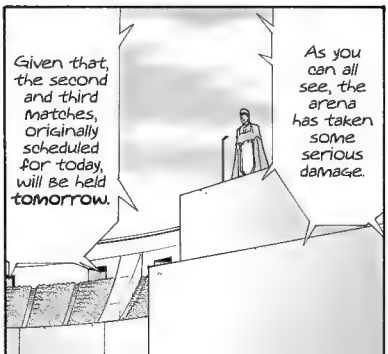
REBECCAAA——!!!
FWOOOOMM

R-RE-BECCA !!!

FLOAT...
SHE'S SO LIGHT...
AND... AND SHE SMELLS SO GOOD...
I-I'M HOLDING...
THE SCARLET EMPRESS IN MY ARMS.

YEEEEEAAAH!
The first match goes to Ash Blake and his Steed, Eco!
The dragon Ash rode was the Maestro Brigitte, a former Earthia!
And there it is, everyone!

THAT DAMN REBECCA ...!


Given that, the second and third matches, originally scheduled for today, will be held tomorrow.
As you can all see, the arena has taken some serious damage.

WELL, I SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE CONTENT THAT ONE OF THE BARRIERS BETWEEN ME AND VICTORY HAS BEEN TORN DOWN.
THAT WAS A TOTAL FARCE SHE PUT ON.

I WONDER IF RE-BECCA'S OKAY....?

THAT'S WHERE...
THEY TOOK HER TO HAVE HER WOUNDS TREATED.

I CAN'T HELP WORRYING ABOUT HOW SHE'S DOING.

I STOPPED BY TO SEE HOW SHE'S DOING, BUT...
TH-THIS IS...
BUSTLE
BUSTLE

I HOPE YOU GET BETTER QUICKLY!
I CAME TO VISIT --!!
PRESI-DENT ...!!
MOB
MOB
I DIDN'T THINK SHE'D HAVE THIS MANY VISITORS ...!
HEY, YOU'RE IN MY WAY!
NO, YOU'RE IN MY WAY!!

HMM? ISN'T THAT THE GUY WHO WAS UP AGAINST THE PRESIDENT IN HER MATCH...?
HUH ?!
CRAP!

IF I CATCH HER FANS' ATTENTION, I DON'T THINK THIS'LL END WELL FOR ME.

UGH, THIS IS ANNOY-ING.
SLIP
I GUESS I WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE HER, HUH?

HUH ?!
YANK
UM, HEY --!
WHA --?!
HMM?
THIS SCENT ...!
ER...
IS THAT YOU, REBECCA ...?

Naaah!
HEH!
I DOUBT ANYONE WILL NOTICE US ALL THE WAY OUT HERE.
YEAH, BUT...
AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE HOSPITAL?
I SEE.
GLAD TO HEAR IT.
I NOTICED YOU FROM THE WINDOW OF MY ROOM, SO I SLIPPED OUT. AND HERE WE ARE.
OH, EVERY-ONE'S OVER-REACTING!
MY ARK KEPT ME FROM BEING HURT SERIOUSLY! THEY JUST WANTED TO GIVE ME A QUICK ONCE-OVER, THAT'S ALL!

ARKS ARE A MANIFESTATION OF MAGIC. AS LONG AS CÚCHULAINN REMEMBERS THE BLUEPRINTS, MY ARK CAN BE RECREATED AN INFINITE NUMBER OF TIMES.
YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING, DO YOU?
UM... I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT EVERY-THING.
ESPECIALLY FOR DESTROYING YOUR ARK LIKE THAT.
SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT.
AND BESIDES, CÚCHU-LAINN HAS HIS PRIDE!
NEXT TIME YOU AND I FACE OFF, I IMAGINE HE'LL HAVE DRAWN UP BLUEPRINTS FOR A NEW ARK THAT CAN WITHSTAND EVEN YOUR EXCALIBUR.
OH, I ALMOST FORGOT.
THESE ARE FOR YOU.

.....
THANK YOU.
I'M SORRY ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS.
ASH...
.....
ARE YOU APOLOGIZING FOR USING TACTICS LIKE OSCAR'S TO HELP ME? AS TRAINING?
AND WHAT'S MORE, WHILE WE WERE FIGHTING...
HUH?
BUT... THAT'S NOT ALL.
YOU KNEW, DID YOU?
I'M THE ONE WHO ARRANGED FOR US TO BE EACH OTHER'S OPPONENTS IN TODAY'S MATCH...

YOU SEE...
I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT...
HUH ...?
TH-THMP
I'M SORRY FOR BRINGING THIS UP SO SUDDENLY, ASH.
WHETHER MY DESIRE TO SEE YOU GROW STRONGER WAS DUE TO MY ROLE AS COUNCIL PRESIDENT...
OR IF I WAS HOPING FOR YOUR VICTORY BECAUSE OF MY FEELINGS AS A WOMAN.
BUT TO BE BLUNT...
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT MY FEELINGS FOR YOU...
VERY MUCH RESEMBLE ECO AND SYLVIA'S.
I...! I...!!
TH-THMP
ER...
TH-THMP
.....!

YOU'RE BLUSHING SO HARD! AND WHAT A SERIOUS EXPRESSION!
HEE HEE!
?!
I KEEP FORGETTING JUST HOW PURE-HEARTED YOU ARE.
NO NEED TO PANIC.
ALL I SAID IS THAT I'M UNSURE OF HOW I FEEL, ALL RIGHT?
UM...
O-OF COURSE !!
WOULD YOU DO ME A FAVOR AND NOT MENTION IT TO ANYONE ELSE?
UNTIL I CAN SORT THAT OUT FOR MYSELF, THOUGH...

HEH! NOW, THEN...
I GUESS I SHOULD BE GETTING BACK TO MY ROOM.
ASH...
THERE'S JUST ONE MORE THING I WANT TO ASK OF YOU FIRST.
BECOME A STRONG MAN.
AND AS THE STRONG MAN WHO SURPASSED ME...
I WANT YOU TO TAKE OSCAR ON DIRECTLY...

I'M ENTRUST-ING...
THE 500-YEAR FESTIVAL TO YOU.
AND WIN.

AND
WIN.

I'M ENTRUST-ING...
THE 500-YEAR FESTIVAL TO YOU.

DRAGONAR
ACADEMY

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SNOOORRE
Chapter LVI
The Ice Blue Princess vs. the Elfin Dancer
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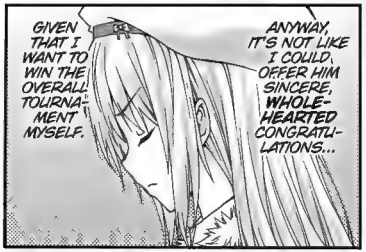
PRIN-CESS...
DIDN'T YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU NEEDED TO SPEAK TO ASH ABOUT?
C-CO-SETTE ...!
NO, ER... IT'S NIGHT ALREADY. I'LL TRY AGAIN ANOTHER TIME.
DEAR ME.
IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, IT'S LONG PAST LIGHTS OUT AT THE BOYS' DORMITORY, ISN'T IT?
IF YOU'RE STOPPING BY SO LATE, THAT MUST MEAN...
YOU WERE PLANNING TO SNEAK INTO HIS BEDROOM, DOESN'T IT?
S-SNEAK-ING...!
NO, THAT-- THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL!
I-I JUST...
WANTED TO CON-GRATULATE ASH ON HIS VICTORY, THAT'S ALL!

BUT...
I LEFT IT TOO LATE, AS YOU CAN SEE.
ACTUALLY, I WANTED TO SEE ASH BECAUSE I'M FEELING DISCOURAGED ABOUT THE PRELIMI-NARIES TOMORROW...
BUT THERE'S NO WAY I CAN TELL COSETTE THAT...!
COME NOW, YOUR HIGHNESS. YOU'LL CATCH COLD.
!
.....
NO, I'M FINE.
WHERE WERE YOU CARRYING SOMETHING LIKE THIS...?
TEE HEE!

ARE YOU SURE?
YES.

OH, WHATEVER.
LET'S GO HOME, COSETTE.


ANYWAY, IT'S NOT LIKE I COULD OFFER HIM SINCERE, WHOLEHEARTED CONGRATULATIONS...
GIVEN THAT I WANT TO WIN THE OVERALL TOURNAMENT MYSELF.

ASH'S POWER IS... ALREADY...
BEYOND ANYTHING I CAN EVEN IMAGINE.
HE'S BECOME SO STRONG.....

I ONLY BECAME A DRAGONAR TO BEGIN WITH THANKS TO ASH. CAN I REALLY WIN...?
WILL I BE ABLE TO DO IT...?

I HAVE NO CHANCE OF WINNING IF I CAN'T GET UP TO THEIR LEVEL.
IT'S THE SAME WITH OSCAR.

AH! PRIN-CESS...
LOOK OVER THERE.
HMM?
OH!

SYLVIA...
!
THAT'S LUCCA ....!!
SHE'S AN ELF IN DANCER...
LUCCA'S ONLY A YUNIOS, BUT EVERYONE CONSIDERS HER A BRILLIANT PRODIGY.
TOMORROW EVERYONE WILL BE ABLE TO MEASURE OUR SKILL AGAINST EACH OTHER.
AND MY OPPONENT DURING THE PRELIMINARY MATCH.
NO ONE IN THE WORLD HAS EVER CONSIDERED ME A PRODIGY...
BUT I ABSOLUTELY CAN'T LOSE TO HER...!
CLENCH...

SYLVIA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
UM...
LET'S SAY I WAS ON A CASUAL NIGHTTIME STROLL?
YOU'RE LYING.
I THINK YOU'RE OUT HERE FOR THE SAME REASON I AM.
TH-TH-MP
HUH ...?
WITH EVERYTHING COMING UP TOMORROW, I-I JUST... FELT LIKE SEEING ASH'S FACE.
.....
THAT'S RIGHT... SHE HAS FEELINGS FOR ASH, TOO.
WHO CARES WHY I'M OUT HERE?
IF YOU'RE JUST OUT HERE TO SEE ASH, WHY ARE YOU SO GRUBBY, HMM?

O-OH, UM...
GAWAIN AND I WERE OUT FLYING A BIT, THAT'S ALL.
SHOULDN'T YOU BE CONSERVING YOUR DRAGON'S STRENGTH FOR TOMORROW? OR IS WORRYING ABOUT THAT SORT OF THING BENEATH A PRODIGY?
IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT GAWAIN, THERE'S NO NEED.
AND MORE IMPOR-TANTLY...
SHOW ME EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT TOMORROW, SYLVIA.
I WANT TO SEE YOUR FEELINGS FOR ASH...
FOR MYSELF, UNDER-STAND?
!

AS IF I WOULDN'T DO MY BEST--!
WELL, THEN.
GOOD NIGHT.
I WON'T LOSE TO YOU, LUCCA.
THE NEXT DAY.
DRAGO-NARS' GUNNER BOUT, 2ND MATCH OF THE PRELIMI-NARY ROUND.
WOOO!!
I'M GOING TO WIN, AND THEN... THEN...!

PRIN-
CESS
--!
ICE
BLUE
PRIN-
CESS!!
YOU
CAN
DO
IT!!
LUCCA!!
OUR
STAR
OF
EKBLATT!!

EVERYONE'S
CHEERING
LOUD ENOUGH
TO BLOW THE
CLOUDS AWAY!
NO SURPRISE
WHEN IT'S THE
PRINCESS
AND LUCCA,
THOUGH!
IT'S
OVERCAST
TODAY,
BUT...

I'LL BE
WATCHING
OVER
YOU BOTH
FROM
HERE...!!
It's time
to start
the second
match
of the
preliminary
rounds!!
SYLVIA...
LUCCA...

Begin!!
Let the battle...
ドオッ
VROOM
WHAP
WHAP
FLOOFF

RRRRAAAARR!!

BWOOOM
TWUM!!

BUT IT'S STILL AN INCREDIBLE MATCH! SEEING THEIR TECHNIQUES PLAYING OFF EACH OTHER IS AMAZING!
Do your best, you two!
NEITHER OF THEM HAS THE POWER REBECCA DOES AS AN ARK DRAGONAR...

MAYBE I SHOULD'VE SHUT THEM DOWN WAY MORE AGGRESSIVELY WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE...
.....
Uggh...

COSETTE ...!!
HEE HEE! THEY'RE NOT DISPLAYING THE TYPE OF SPIRIT ONE MIGHT HOPE FOR, THOUGH!
I SUPPOSE THAT HAS TO DO WITH THEM BOTH BEING FIRED UP OVER THE AFFECTIONS OF A CERTAIN GENTLEMAN. ♡

BOOOM
!!

L-LANCELOT--! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
THAT'S FREEZING MAGIC! I GOT CARE-LESS...!
YOUR TECHNIQUE IS CLEARLY SUPERIOR TO MINE...
AND YOU'VE BEEN WHITTLING AWAY AT GAWAIN'S STAMINA.
BUT I'VE TRAINED A LOT SINCE LOSING TO OSCAR...!
I'VE DONE EVERYTHING I CAN TO WIN THIS AND MAKE MY WISH COME TRUE--!
THAT'S ALL TRUE FOR ME, TOO!
I'VE POURED BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS INTO THE MOST GRUELING TRAINING I COULD!
.....
AND IS THAT ALL YOU'VE BEEN DOING?

WH-WHAT?
HAVE YOU ONLY BEEN TRAINING, SYLVIA?
I KNOW WHAT A HARD WORKER YOU ARE, SO...
IN ORDER TO PREPARE MYSELF AS WELL AS POSSIBLE, I'VE DONE OTHER THINGS, TOO.
TCH!
SO WHAT IF YOU HAVE?!
I'VE SPENT EVERY SINGLE DAY WITH LANCELOT, WORKING TO HONE OUR SKILLS TOGETHER!
THAT'S WHAT'S CALLED FOR!
IT'S EVERY-THING I NEED!
HMM. I SEE.

IF THAT'S THE EXTENT OF YOUR FEELINGS FOR ASH...
I'M GOING TO BE THE VICTOR HERE.
!!
SHUF!!
I'LL SHOW YOU THE FEELINGS I HAVE FOR HIM.
FROO
THEY'VE TAKEN ON A BEAUTIFUL SHAPE.
I'VE CHANNELED THEM INTO A DANCE OF PASSION...
THAT ONLY AN EKBLATTIAN, LIKE ME, CAN PERFORM.

BUT... BUT DOESN'T SHE NEED A MAGIC CIRCLE IN THE SKY FOR THAT...?
IS LUCCA ABOUT TO PERFORM A DRAGON DANCE?!
WAIT...
HMPH. YOU'RE ALL SO NAÏVE.
I CAN'T SEE SYLVIA, OF ALL PEOPLE, GIVING HER THE LEEWAY TO CREATE ONE.
OSCAR'S RIGHT! THE CLOUDS ARE ALL FOCUSED RIGHT ABOVE US!
!
AND IT'S JUST WHAT YOU'D EXPECT FROM LUCCA SARLINEN... THE PRODIGY FROM EKBLATT.
I CAN ONLY THINK OF ONE EXPLANATION.
ONE GLANCE AT THE SKY SHOULD TELL YOU THERE'S ALREADY SOMETHING UNNATURAL AT WORK.
THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN A CLEAR DAY THROUGHOUT ANSULLIVAN, BUT THE SKY RIGHT ABOVE THE ARENA IS FULL OF CLOUDS.

IT'S ALL UNFOLDING AS I PREDICTED.
THE PRINCESS WILL BE DEFEATED DURING HER PRELIMINARY ROUND.
DRAGON DANCE...
THIRD ELE-MENT...
SCORCH-ING METEOR!

ZAAAAA

ZAAAA

THE CLOUDS PARTED ...!!
WAIT--DID YOU DRAW THE MAGIC CIRCLE IN THE SKY IN ADVANCE?!
YES.
I DID IT LAST NIGHT.
SO THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.
SHE GOT ALL FILTHY FROM FLYING SO HIGH?
LANCELOT, YOU HAVE TO GET MOVING!
BUT THE FREEZING MAGIC SHE USED BEFORE IS--
I WON'T LET YOU UNDO MY MAGIC...!
BWAA

VSSSSH
!!
UNH...
DRO
DRO
DRO
AA-AAA-AAH--!!!

IS THIS HOW I LOSE ...?
LUCCA... TRULY IS A PRODIGY...
PRIN-CESS ...!!
HMPH. THAT'S THAT, THEN.
BEING ABLE TO CONVEY HOW STRONGLY I FEEL?
WITHOUT...
ASH...

OSCAR.
I THINK IT'S TOO EARLY TO ASSUME WE KNOW HOW THIS ENDS.
THE PRINCESS AND LANCE-LOT...
ARE STRONGER THAN YOU THINK!
SHE WORKS TO STRENGTHEN HER BOND WITH LANCELOT EVERY CHANCE SHE GETS...
AND SHE'S ALWAYS TRYING HARDER THAN ANYONE ELSE! THAT'S WHO SHE IS!
"I'M GIVING THIS TO YOU!
"YOU'RE GOING TO BECOME A DRAGO-NAR!!"
ASH ...!!
YES--! AS LONG AS LANCELOT AND I ARE TOGETHER, I'LL NEVER BE HUMILIATED IN DEFEAT!

I STILL HAVE MORE EXPERIENCE THAN SHE DOES...!!
THINK, SYLVIA! FINE, LUCCA'S A PRODIGY, BUT SO WHAT?!
TCH ...!!
BUT HER DRAGON'S FEET ARE ON THE GROUND ...!!!
WAIT... SHE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ATTACK...
THAT WON'T SAVE YOU!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM EVERY SINGLE DIRECTION...!!
PUT UP A HEXAGON SHIELD ON ALL SIDES!!
LANCE-LOT!!

SYLVIA!!
PRIN-
CESS!!
DRO
DRO
DRO

TH-WHUUUD...
ズゥゥゥーン
L-LANCE-LOT...
COL-LAPSED ...
ざわ
MURMUR
THAT MEANS THE PRINCESS IS...!

LUCCA ....!!!
CALM DOWN...
HUFF..
HUFF...
thunk
IT'S OVER NOW.
EVERY-THING'S... OKAY NOW.
SYLVIA'S OFF HER STEED'S BACK.
SHE FELL OFF. AND I WON.
EVERY-THING IS ALL RIGHT.
YOU DID WELL! LUCCA! EVERYTHING IS...ALL RIGHT...
HUFF..
HUFF..

LOSING YOUR FOCUS NOW OF ALL TIMES?
YOU REALLY ARE STILL JUST A YUNIOS... AREN'T YOU, LUCCA?
WHA ...?!
!!

EEEP!
ぽすboふん
SHOVE
SILENCE...
B-BUT HOW...?
CLANK
I USED LANCELOT'S TRANSFERENCE MAGIC.
LAST NIGHT, AFTER EXHAUSTING HIMSELF WITH THE DRAGON DANCE MAGIC...
GAWAIN DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE STRENGTH LEFT TO FLY, DID HE?
THAT'S WHY HIS FEET WERE STILL ON THE GROUND WHEN YOU ATTACKED.

THERE, SEE? YOU'RE STILL THINKING LIKE A YUNIOS.
BUT... BUT I THOUGHT DISMOUNTING OR BEING UNSEATED MEANT YOU LOST...?

I KNEW I COULD WIN IF I MANAGED TO DODGE OR CANCEL OUT YOUR MAGIC, SO...
I ASKED LANCELOT TO CARRY ME HERE.

IT DOESN'T COUNT.
AS LONG AS MY BODY NEVER ACTUALLY TOUCHES THE GROUND...

YOU WERE STRONG TOO!
YOU'RE AS GIFTED AS EVERYONE SAYS. THAT WAS AN INCREDIBLE FIGHT.

LANCE-LOT'S FINE, TOO, ISN'T HE?
YOU TRAINED HIM FOR STAMINA, AND YOU WON, SYLVIA.

ASH, WERE YOU WATCH-ING?
That concludes the second preliminary match of the Dragonars' Gunner Bout!
I WON, TOO.
The victory goes to her royal highness Sylvia Lautrea-mont!!
I'M GLAD YOU WORKED SO HARD...
BOTH OF YOU!!

OH, WHATEVER. THE SECOND PRELIMINARY MATCH IS MEANINGLESS ANYHOW.
I'LL GET TO FIGHT YOU SOON, AND I CAN'T WAIT.
DON'T FORGET YOU'RE FACING MAX FIRST.
HA! AS IF THAT'LL BE A CHAL-LENGE.
SOON WE'LL GET TO...
BATTLE TO DETERMINE OUR FUTURE...
ASHLEY-- OR, I'M SORRY-- ASH.

KLATTER—
CRASH
HONESTLY, CELESTINA!! HOW MANY MISTAKES MUST YOU MAKE BEFORE YOU LEARN, YOU WORTHLESS GIRL?!
I-I'M SO SORRY! I'M SORRY...
Chapter LVII
The Night After the Battle, The Calm Before the Storm

FLINCH
CELES-
TINA
!!!

GULP...

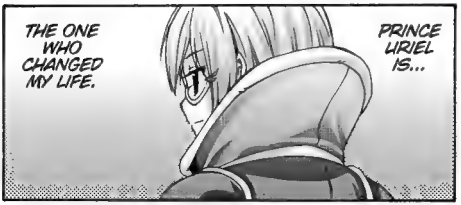
Good
grief.
!

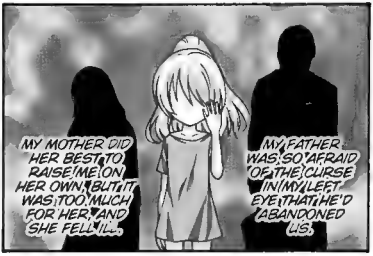
AND, I HEARD THAT PRINCE URIEL CHOSE HER AND PLANS TO PRESENT HER TO HIS MAJESTY.
WHY IN THE WORLD WOULD LARON HOUSE TAKE IN SUCH AN INCOMPETENT CHILD?
I HEARD SHE CAME WITH A PERSONAL ENDORSEMENT FROM THE ROYAL FAMILY.
GOODNESS. OUR PRINCE IS SO CAPRICIOUS.

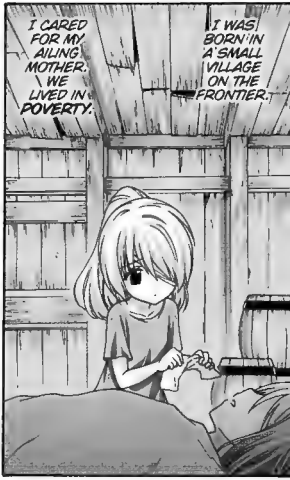
WE
WERE
JUST,
AH--!
Eeek!
U-
UM...
!

!!
WHISPER
GIRLS!!
HUSH!!

WHAT BRINGS YOU DOWN TO THE KITCHEN, OF ALL PLACES ...?
WH-WHY, IF IT ISN'T PRINCE URIEL!!
PARDON MY INTRU-SION.
!
YOUR PLACE IS NO LONGER HERE.
HUH ...?
BY ORDER OF MY FATHER.
REACH
COME, CELES-TINA.
AH.


THE ONE WHO CHANGED MY LIFE.
PRINCE URIEL IS...


MY MOTHER DID HER BEST TO RAISE ME ON HER OWN, BUT IT WAS TOO MUCH FOR HER, AND SHE FELL ILL.
MY FATHER WAS SO AFRAID OF THE CURSE IN MY LEFT EYE THAT HE'D ABANDONED US.


I WAS BORN IN A SMALL VILLAGE ON THE FRONTIER.
I CARED FOR MY AILING MOTHER. WE LIVED IN POVERTY.

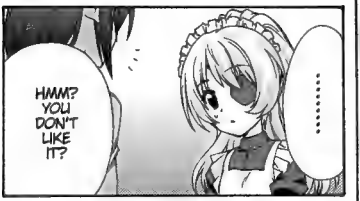
THE PRINCE ARRIVED.
BUT THEN, WHEN I WE WERE IN DIRE NEED OF MONEY...

COME WITH ME.
THE KING OF CHEVRON WILL HAVE NEED OF YOU ONE DAY.
YOUR EYE PROVES I WAS RIGHT.
YOU'RE ALMOST CERTAINLY ONE OF PLUTO'S CHILDREN.
IF YOU ACCOMPANY ME, I SWEAR THAT YOUR KIN WILL NO LONGER WANT FOR MONEY.
.....!!
I WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING OF CHEVRON...
WHO ORDERED LAFON HOUSE TO ADOPT ME.
MY EYE MIGHT HAVE BEEN CURSED...
BUT IF IT COULD NOW HELP MY MOTHER, AFTER BRINGING HER SUCH MISERY...
I WAS WILLING TO DO WHATEVER WAS NECESSARY.

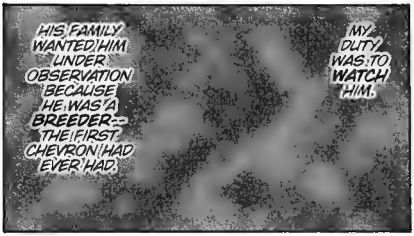
CELES-
TINA.
OH!
E-
EXCUSE
ME,
BUT...
MAY
I ASK...
WHERE
I'M TO
GO?
OH,
YES.
THAT.
YOU'RE
GOING
TO...
BECOME
MY
YOUNGER
BROTHER'S
PERSONAL
SERVANT.
YOUNG-
ER...
BROTH-
ER...
AND
SO...
AFTER A
FEW DAYS'
TRIP BY
CARRIAGE
FROM THE
CAPITAL
CITY OF
ARKHAM...

I...
FOUND MYSELF STANDING BEFORE A YOUNG BOY.
MY MOTHER IS THE KING'S MISTRESS--AND A COMMONER.
I'M DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR MY FATHER THE KING'S KINDNESS IN PLACING A MEMBER OF LAFON HOUSE IN MY SERVICE.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
I-I'M CELESTINA--CELESTINA LAFON!
BUT THERE WAS A REMARKABLE CALM AROUND HIM.
MY NAME IS OSCAR.
HE LOOKED TO BE ABOUT MY AGE...
WELCOME.

MIGHT I...
CALL YOU "CELES"?


.....
HMM? YOU DON'T LIKE IT?

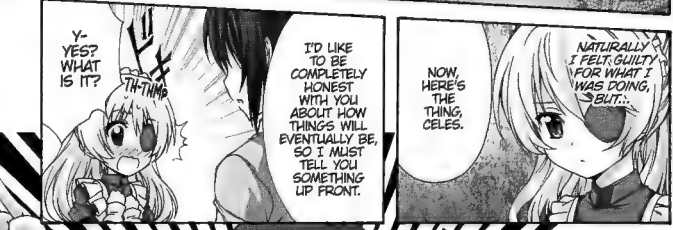
OH! OH NO, IT'S FINE! TRULY!
PEOPLE USUALLY ASK ABOUT MY EYE PATCH BEFORE EVEN ASKING MY NAME.


MY DUTY WAS TO WATCH HIM.
HIS FAMILY WANTED HIM UNDER OBSERVATION BECAUSE HE WAS A BREEDER-- THE FIRST CHEVRON I HAD EVER HAD.

WHAT AN UNUSUAL PERSON.
AND... AND YET I...

THAT APPARENTLY MEANT THAT HIS BODY CONTAINED A DRAGON LARVA...
AND THE KING FEARED OSCAR WOULD ONE DAY USE THAT DRAGON'S STRENGTH TO USURP THE THRONE OF CHEVRON.

MY ORDERS WERE TO BE OSCAR'S CONSTANT COMPAN-ION...
AND TO DECEIVE HIM-- MAKE HIM TRUST ME.


NATURALLY I FELT GUILTY FOR WHAT I WAS DOING, BUT...
NOW, HERE'S THE THING, CELES.
I'D LIKE TO BE COMPLETELY HONEST WITH YOU ABOUT HOW THINGS WILL EVENTUALLY BE, SO I MUST TELL YOU SOMETHING UP FRONT.
TH-THMP
Y-YES? WHAT IS IT?

ARE YOU LISTEN-ING?
I AM...
TA-DA!
GOING TO BE CHEV-RON'S KING ONE DAY!

U-UM...
.....

N-NOT AT ALL!
BUT IF...
DID THAT SOUND WEIRD TO YOU?
I WAS EXPECTING A RATHER DIFFERENT REACTION.

.....!!

UM! Y-YES?!
TWITCH
Celes
SO! CELES!

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO SECRETLY KEEP AN EYE ON HIM...?
HE COMES RIGHT OUT AND SAYS THINGS LIKE THAT...

SERVING UNDER ME REQUIRES...
THE RESOLUTION TO WALK THE PATH OF MIGHT AT MY SIDE!
RESO-LUTION...
BUT... UM...
Y-YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT... EVEN AS A MAID, I'M A FAILURE.
I... I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH USE I CAN BE TO YOU...
.....
BUT SO WHAT? IS THAT ANY REASON TO WALK AWAY FROM THE THRONE? TO GIVE UP ON MY FUTURE?
NO, OF COURSE NOT!
I'M 108TH IN LINE FOR THE THRONE, SO IN THAT RESPECT... I'M A FAILURE, TOO.
WE'RE WELL MATCHED, THEN.

NEVER GIVE UP BEFORE EVEN BEGINNING...
AND NEVER BELIEVE THAT ANYTHING IS BEYOND YOU.

.....!
WIPE
BUT... BUT MY EYE IS CURSED ....!

I LIVE BY THAT PHILOSOPHY...
AND AS MY MAID, YOU MUST SHARE IT FROM NOW ON.
WE'LL WALK THE SAME PATH, COMRADES IN FAILURE!

NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, THERE'LL ALWAYS BE SOME OBSTACLE.
THAT'S TRUE FOR ME, TOO.

AND ON THAT SUBJECT, IF YOU'RE TO SERVE AS MY MAID, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT ME.
LET'S GET IT OUT IN THE OPEN RIGHT NOW.

BUT FIRST, I WANT YOU TO STOP HIDING YOURSELF.
LET ME SEE THE FACE OF MY MAID IN ALL HER GLORY.
A-AS YOU WISH.
THE MORE OSCAR SPOKE, THE MORE I BEGAN TO THINK IT MIGHT BE POSSI-BLE...
THAT MY NEW MASTER COULD BECOME KING ONE DAY.
I...
I AM...
AT YOUR SER-VICE!

CELES, ARE YOU THERE?
KA-CHAK
OH, THERE YOU ARE.
CELES?
I WAS NAPPING, MAGGOT.
GLARE
WHAT WAS SO IMPORT-ANT IT COULDN'T WAIT?
HMM?
.....

KA-WHAM
The Kingdom of Chevron's Magical Warship
Claíomh Solais

.....

SO WAS THIS REALLY THE BEST TIME FOR A NAP ANYWAY...?
おぉぉぉ
IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR THE AUDIENCE WITH MY FATHER.
YOU'RE AS STRONG AS EVER!

ARE YOU COMING OR WHAT?!
I KNOW HOW TO DO MY DAMN JOB, SO GET OFF MY BACK!
STOMP
STOMP

CELES?
FINE! THAT'S FINE!

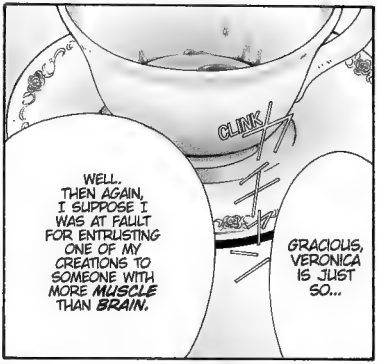
EVEN WHEN I FACE MY FATHER...
I'LL NEVER FALTER ON MY RIGHT-EOUS PATH...!

.....
Heh...

CELES, IT MAKES ME SO HAPPY...
THAT YOU'VE BECOME SO STRONG AND THAT YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN HERE TO SUPPORT ME.
HAVING YOU HERE NOW AND IN ALL THE DAYS AHEAD IS WHY...

THE CLAÍOMH SOLAIS--CHEVRON'S MAGICAL WARSHIP.
ONE RARELY HAS THE CHANCE TO SEE IT AT SUCH CLOSE RANGE.
BUT SEEING IT, I CAN'T HELP BUT REMEMBER...
MY POOR, PRECIOUS SILVANUS, DESTROYED AT MY BRUTE OF A SISTER'S HANDS.

EUNICE! TEA!!
BUT OF COURSE.


CLINK
WELL. THEN AGAIN, I SUPPOSE I WAS AT FAULT FOR ENTRUSTING ONE OF MY CREATIONS TO SOMEONE WITH MORE MUSCLE THAN BRAIN.
GRACIOUS, VERONICA IS JUST SO...

AND YET... HERE HE IS, HAVING PERSONALLY COME ALL THIS WAY TO ATTEND.
I MAY BE A HUMBLE SCIENTIST, BUT I MUST ADMIT I'M A TAD CURIOUS AS TO WHAT BRINGS HIM HERE.

I HEAR A CERTAIN SOMEONE HAS BEEN SUMMONED ON BOARD.
THE 500-YEAR FESTIVAL SHOULD BE NOTHING TO THE KING OF CHEVRON BUT A TINY EVENT IN A NEIGHBORING LAND.

HMM. WHEN OSCAR BRAILSFORD AND MAXIMILLIAN RUSSELL FACED OFF...
OSCAR WON EASILY, TO NO ONE'S SURPRISE.
FURTHERMORE, DURING TODAY'S MATCH I OBSERVED SOMETHING QUITE INTRIGUING.
EUNICE, PLEASE BRING ME THE RELEVANT MATERIALS.
A BLACK GEM WITH A DULL GLEAM, UNSETTLING THE SOUL OF ANYONE WHOSE EYES FALL UPON IT...
HOWEVER, THE GEM ON THE BROW OF TRISTAN, OSCAR BRAILSFORD'S STEED, WAS MOST INTRIGUING.
YOUR HIGHNESS, TOMORROW IS THE LAST DAY OF THE FESTIVAL.
PERHAPS YOU OUGHT TO TURN IN EARLY.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
I COULD SWEAR I'VE SEEN A LITERARY REFERENCE TO THAT VERY OBJECT, BUT...
FOR THE LIFE OF ME, I CAN'T RECALL PRECISELY WHERE.
I HOPE THAT...
EVERYTHING UNFOLDS SMOOTHLY FOR THE FESTIVAL'S FINAL DAY.

MAJESTY, I PRAY THAT I FIND YOU IN GOOD HEALTH AND SPIRIT--
Aboard the Claíomh Solais.

HMPH.
DON'T BOTHER SPOUTING GREETINGS YOU DON'T MEAN.
I MUST DIFFER, SIRE.
COMPARED TO MY BROTHER, I'M UTTERLY ORDINARY.
YOUR EXPRESSION IS AS IMPUDENT AS URIEL'S.
FUME
THE MASTER OF THE MAESTRO TRISTAN, "ORDINARY"?!
YOU KNOW FULL WELL WHY I ASKED PRINCESS VERONICA TO GUARD ME THIS DAY!!

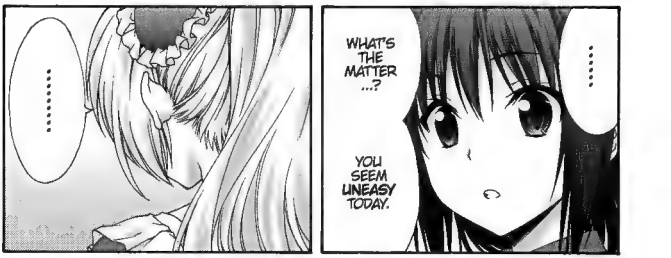
YOU'RE ENTIRELY RIGHT THAT, SHOULD I WISH IT...
.....
I COULD SUMMON TRISTAN HERE...
BABBLe
AND THAT HE COULD CRUSH YOU AND YOUR THRONE IN A HEART-BEAT.
BUT I WISH YOU TO KNOW YOU NEED NEVER FEAR SUCH A THING.
SUCH ACTION WOULD BE DESPICABLE, AND FAR BENEATH ME.

AFTER ALL, WHAT I ASPIRE TO IS...
TO INHERIT THE THRONE FAIRLY, WITHOUT TARNISHING THE NAME OF THE ROYAL FAMILY.
YOU ...!
.....
HMPH.
AH, WHATEVER.
I DID NOT CALL YOU HERE TO LISTEN TO YOU BOAST.
THEN MAY I ASK WHY YOU SUMMONED ME, SIRE?
I CHERISH THE MEMORY OF THE DAYS WHEN I RODE MY BELOVED STEED, WITH OUR FAMILY'S TREASURED SWORD, THE TIR NA NÓG, IN MY HAND.
MORE THAN ANYTHING, I WISH I COULD SWING THAT BLADE WITH THE EFFORTLESSNESS OF MY YOUTH.
.....
I HAVE GROWN OLD.

BUT FOR THAT TO HAPPEN, I REQUIRE THE LIFEBLOOD OF A MEMBER OF THE IMPERIAL HOUSE OF THE HOLY DRAGONS.
WILL WIELD IT...!!
ONE DAY, I, TOO...
THE ROYAL SWORD, THE TIRINA NÓG...
THAT SHOULD BE A SIMPLE TASK FOR A STUDENT OF THIS ACADEMY, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
YOU MUST SEIZE THE YOUNG DRAGON "ECO" OR WHATEVER SHE'S CALLED, AND BRING HER TO ME AT ONCE.
YOU HAVE UNTIL DUSK TOMORROW...
SO, HE'S FINALLY REVEALING HIS HAND...!

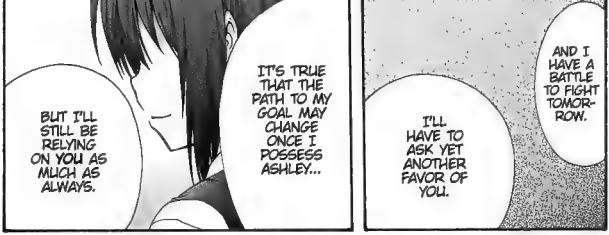
WHILE I AM PRESENT IN ANSUL-LIVAN!!!
.....
AS YOU WISH.
.....!
ON THAT NOTE, YOUR MAJESTY...
AS I MUST PREPARE FOR MY MATCH TOMORROW, KINDLY ALLOW ME TO TAKE MY LEAVE FOR NOW.

OSCAR!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. I DON'T WANT TO SPEND A MINUTE LONGER THAN NECESSARY ON A PIECE OF JUNK LIKE THIS SHIP.
UGH, IT'S EXHAUSTING HAVING TO MAKE NICE WITH OLD PEOPLE.
SORRY FOR THE WAIT, CELES.

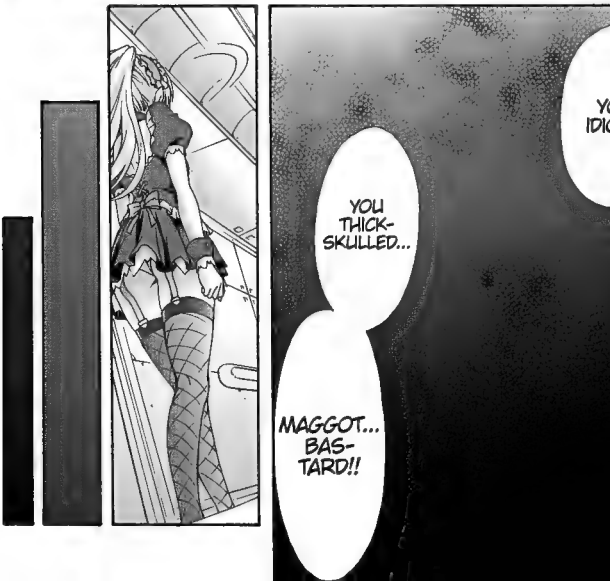

.....
WHAT'S THE MATTER ...?
YOU SEEM UNEASY TODAY.
.....

THEN...
O-OF COURSE NOT!
DID ONE OF THOSE SWINE FROM THE LAFON FAMILY SAY SOMETHING NASTY TO YOU WHILE I WAS GONE?

CELES ...?
YOU'RE RIGHT.
LET'S GET GOING.
IT'S BEST NOT TO LINGER ON A SHIP LIKE THIS. IT ISN'T EVEN MINE YET.


AND I HAVE A BATTLE TO FIGHT TOMORROW.
I'LL HAVE TO ASK YET ANOTHER FAVOR OF YOU.
IT'S TRUE THAT THE PATH TO MY GOAL MAY CHANGE ONCE I POSSESS ASHLEY...
BUT I'LL STILL BE RELYING ON YOU AS MUCH AS ALWAYS.

.....


YOU IDIOT...
YOU THICK-SKULLED...
MAGGOT... BAS-TARD!!

RSTL

THE DAY IS FINALLY HERE.
I FEEL DREADFUL SAYING GOODBYE THIS WAY...
OSCAR.
EVEN AFTER SO LONG TOGETHER, YOU NEVER ONCE DOUBTED OR SUSPECTED ME...
MUCH AS I WISHED YOU WOULD.

NO ONE WHO SAW YOU SLEEP WOULD EVER MISTAKE YOU FOR A MAN.
THE CHOICES YOUR MOTHER MADE...
WERE CRUEL TO YOU.
IF YOU'D BEEN RAISED AS A WOMAN...
ALL THE MEN IN THE PALACE WOULD HAVE FALLEN WILDLY IN LOVE WITH YOU BY NOW.
KA-CLUNK...

THERE'S NO GOING BACK.
GUROOO
ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
HE SET US ON THIS ROAD...
WE CAN'T FIGHT IT, OSCAR.
AND...
"ALL OF IT-- OUR MEETING, OUR WHOLE RELATIONSHIP... EVEN OUR EMOTIONS...!"

I...
AM GOING TO...
DESTROY YOUR "PATH OF MIGHT."

DRAGONAR
ACADEMY

UHHH...
UNH...
NN...
UNN-HHH...
AND THE FINAL MATCHES ARE TOMOR-ROW...
YOU SHOULDN'T... DO THAT... ECO....
I THOUGHT... YOU'D BROKEN THAT PLAY-BITING HABIT...
WHATEVER IS THE MATTER, ASH?
HEE!

Chapter LVIII
Ashley's Imprisonment ①
NAVI --?!!!
N...
OR HADN'T YOU YET NOTICED...
WHO WAS ACTUALLY NIBBLING ON YOU?

Chapter LVIII
Ashley's Imprisonment ①
N...
WHO WAS ACTUALLY NIBBLING ON YOU?
OR HADN'T YOU YET NOTICED...

NAVI
--?!!!

ASH?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE MET LIKE THIS, HASN'T IT...
THAT'S RIGHT. WE'RE AT THE DRAGON'S WORK-SHOP.
THEN... THEN THIS IS...
AND LATELY I'VE BEEN WITH ECO DAY AND NIGHT, HELPING HER MASTER THE BRACELET OF AVALON.
YOU MIGHT SAY THANK YOU.
SO I SHOULDN'T SUMMON YOU UNLESS THERE'S SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS?
Am I nothing but an advance warning system to you?
N-NO, THAT'S NOT...
DID YOU NEED TO TELL ME SOME-THING?!
WH-WHY DID YOU BRING ME HERE?!
BLUSH
TICK-TOCK-TIME
THAT'S A BIT COLD, ISN'T IT?
OH MY...

WHILE I'M STILL WHO I AM NOW...
I'D LIKE TO GET A LITTLE CLOSER TO YOU.
AND ALSO...
WHO YOU ARE NOW ...?
WHOA! N-NAVI?!
SMILE

THAT'S WHY I SUMMONED YOU HERE.
STROKE...
ACK!
UM...
GUH ...!
MMM... OOH!
IT FEELS...
SO GOOD.
I HAVEN'T TEASED YOU LIKE THIS...
SINCE THE VERY FIRST TIME WE MET, HAVE I?

WAIT A SECOND !!
RETREAT
!
UHH ...!
W...
HUFF... HUFF...
NAVI, I-I CAN'T DO THIS!
HMPH...
NOT SO... SO EASILY.
ASH.
ARE YOU THINKING THAT DOING THIS WITH ME WOULD BE BETRAYING ECO SOMEHOW...?

EVENTUALLY, EVEN SILLY JOKES LIKE THIS...
WILL REGISTER AS PART OF ECO'S OWN EXPERIENCE AND MEMORIES.
THAT'S PART OF IT, BUT...
DON'T WORRY.
AND THAT'S WHY YOU SAID... "WHILE I'M STILL WHO I AM NOW..."?
YES. THAT DAY IS COMING.
I EXPLAINED ALL THIS BEFORE, DIDN'T I?
ONE DAY, ECO AND I WILL FULLY INTEGRATE AND REIGN OVER THE SUMMIT OF THE DRAGON TRIBE. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, MY ROLE WILL BE OVER.
ECO KEEPS GROWING AND LEARNING...
AND IT DOES FEEL A BIT LONELY TO CONTEMPLATE, BUT THAT'S MY PURPOSE.

EVERY-THING ABOUT THIS SEEMS WRONG TO ME.
IS THAT REALLY ALL YOU FEEL ABOUT IT? "A BIT LONELY"?
.....
NAVI...
WHEN YOU FIRST TOLD ME, WE WERE KIND OF AT OUR WITS' END.
AND I THOUGHT IT WAS VITAL FOR ECO TO OBTAIN YOUR POWER.
BUT NOTH-ING'S CHANGED.
ALL ALONG, THAT'S BEEN MY REASON FOR EXISTENCE.
BUT WHEN I'M HERE TALKING TO YOU LIKE THIS... WHEN THE TWO OF US INTERACT...
IT JUST FEELS SO BIZARRE TO THINK THAT SOMEDAY YOU'LL VANISH INTO ECO AND BE GONE.
.....
I'M NOT SURE HOW TO SAY THIS...
BUT...

I KNOW YOU EMBODY ALL THE MEMORIES OF THE DRAGON TRIBE DOWN THROUGH THE AGES...
BUT DOESN'T THAT *ALSO* MEAN YOU'RE THE MEMORIES OF EVERYONE WHO'S INTERACTED WITH THEM?
ALL THOSE ENCOUNTERS... THE THINGS WE FELT...
AREN'T THOSE ALL MEMORIES THAT SHOULDN'T BE ERASED...?!
.....
THAT'S ...
EVEN IF YOU *DO* BECOME ONE WITH ECO...
I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU AS *YOURSELF*, NAVI! YOU'LL ALWAYS EXIST IN MY MEMORIES!!
.....!!

I MEAN...
YOU'RE A DEAR FRIEND, RIGHT?!
.....
I... I DON'T...
WANT TO LOSE YOU, NAVI!
SAYING THINGS LIKE THAT...
ONLY MAKES IT ALL HARDER FOR ME.

GLANCE ちら
IT'S UNFAIR TO TALK THAT WAY.
HEARING YOU TALK... I...
WH-WHAT'S GOING ON WITH HER NOW?
I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT LOOK ON HER FACE BEFORE!
DA-THMP
!!
DAMMIT! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S NOT BEING FAIR, NAVI...!!
UM... RIGHT, SO...

GAH!
THE FLOOR
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY BODY?!
!
KRA-KOOOM
SOMEONE'S TRYING TO WAKE YOU UP!
THAT MEANS ...
!
BUT MORE THAN THAT, I FEEL!!! SOMETHING... DARK...!!

ASH, BE CAREFUL!
I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO WAKE UP IN A PREDICA-MENT.
BUT DON'T EVER FORGET...
NAVI ...!!
JOLT
THAT ECO AND I...
ARE BOTH...
ALWAYS ON YOUR SIDE.

ARE YOU, MAGGOT?
FINALLY AWAKE...
UNNH...
STOMP!
!!
URK!
GRIND
OW-WW--!!

UM, YOU REALIZE LOTS OF PEOPLE WOULD DIE FROM THIS, RIGHT?
GRIND...
!
IT'S CELES!
AND YOU'RE PATHETIC, YELPING WHEN I BARELY NUDGED YOU.
YOU'RE... OSCAR'S MAID ...?!
Zz
HEY --!
JOLT
WHEW ...!
YOU...
EVEN WEAR BLACK UNDER-WEAR, HUH?
!

LISTEN, I WASN'T TRYING TO LOOK! I COULDN'T HELP IT AT THAT ANGLE!
AND I HAD TO SAY SOMETHING TO MAKE HER MOVE!
OH, WELL.
CLUNK
LET'S CUT TO THE CHASE.
DID... DID OSCAR SEND YOU?
SHUT UP AND PUT THIS ON.
PUT WHAT ON?
!!
ARE YOU SERI-OUS?!
VERY.
IT'S A LOVELY OUTFIT FOR YOUR LOVELY SELF ASHLEY!
NOW HURRY UP AND GET DRESSED!
W-WAIT A SEC...!
WHAT THE HECK IS GOING ON?! I DON'T UNDER-STAND!

CHAAK
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS.
THINK YOU CAN WIN IF I BLOW HOLES IN YOUR LIMBS?
NOT TO MENTION, I HAVEN'T LOST THE MATCH YET!
I don't have to dress like a girl unless I lose!
DO YOU EVER STOP BLATHERING, YOU ANNOYING MAGGOT?
GIVEN HOW CONFIDENT OSCAR IS ABOUT HER SKILLS, I DOUBT SHE'D BE HAPPY ABOUT ANY OF THIS!
ARE YOU THREATENING ME? SERIOUSLY?
YOU'RE NOT WRONG. I'M ACTING ON MY OWN RIGHT NOW.
AND I'M TELLING YOU TO PUT ON THE STUPID DRESS AND GET READY TO LEAVE. OTHERWISE...
YOU HAVE SOME INSIGHT INTO OSCAR, HMM?
.....

I'LL PUT SOME HOLES IN HER INSTEAD!
!!

WHAT KIND OF MAID STRIKES OUT ON HER OWN LIKE THIS? SOMETHING'S WEIRD HERE.
OKAY, OKAY. I'M MOVING.

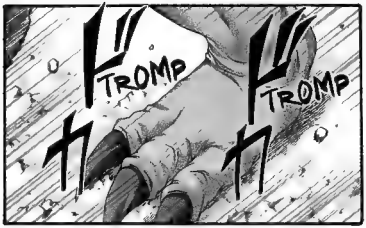
MAYBE SOMEONE ELSE IS PULLING STRINGS BEHIND THE SCENES...?

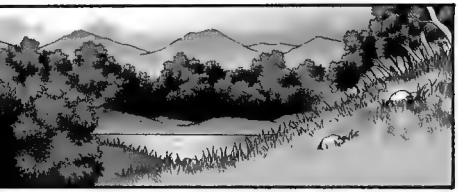
HOW THE HECK DID THIS HAPPEN?
Oooh...!
STRIDE
UGH...
STRIDE

IT'S THE MORNING OF A CRITICAL MATCH, AND HERE I AM...
CRAP ...!
WHY DOES EVERYONE KEEP STARING AT ME?
TAKING A STROLL WITH MY OPPO-NENT'S MAID.
C'MON.
PICK UP THE PACE.
HEY! YOU, DRIVER!
HOW FAR ARE WE GOING, ANYWAY?!
And with me dressed like this...
!!
SERI-OUSLY, HOW FAR DO YOU PLAN TO TAKE ME?!
WE'RE TAKING A CAR-RIAGE?!

LAKE RUBINIA, PLEASE.
THE MAIN ROADS ARE BADLY CLOGGED FROM THE FESTIVAL.
I'LL HAVE TO TAKE A LONGER ROUTE. IS THAT ALL RIGHT?

YES. WE'D PREFER THAT, ACTUALLY.
.....


TROMP
TROMP



ALL RIGHT, HERE WE ARE. BE CAREFUL, NOW...
YOUNG LADIES.

THIS IS WHERE I FOUND OUT OSCAR'S SECRET...
LAKE RUBINIA, HUH...?
SIGH...
HE WASN'T EVEN A LITTLE SUSPICIOUS...?
GET A MOVE ON.
ONE OF THESE BUILDINGS SHOULD DO FINE.
ALL RIGHT.
EVER HEARD OF A LITTLE THING CALLED KEYS? OR LOCKS?
CLUNK
WE'RE JUST GONNA WALTZ IN THERE?!
CREAK...
AN ABANDONED BUILDING...?

A GOOD MAID IS PREPARED FOR ANYTHING.
CREAK
WHY ARE YOU CARRYING STUFF LIKE THAT AROUND?!
.....
CLANK
CLANK
CLANK
I DON'T WANT A MAID AT ALL!
WILL YOU SHUT UP?!
THINK ABOUT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS...
ACK!
SHOVE
LIKE THE FACT THAT YOU'RE ASHLEY RIGHT NOW.
SPEAK IN A MORE FEMININE TONE! AT LEAST TRY TO ACT LADYLIKE, WILL YOU?
.....!!
THUD

OH NO!
I DON'T WANNA FLASH MY UNDER-WEAR!
GRAB
DRESSED LIKE A GIRL RIGHT DOWN TO THE UNDERWEAR.
THERE YOU GO. GOOD GIRL, ASHLEY.
DON'T MAKE FUN OF ME!
AND SHOULDN'T YOU START EXPLAINING WHY THE HELL YOU BROUGHT ME OUT HERE--?!

WHEN I LOOK AT YOU LIKE THIS...
IT'S IRRITATING HOW PRETTY YOU ARE.
LEAN
!!

OH, C'MON, CELES--! YOU'RE WAY CUTER THAN THIS!
LOOK IN A MIRROR SOME-TIME!
BEING PRETTIER THAN ME EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE A GUY...
YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE, MAGGOT.
BLUSH
.....
NO.
I DON'T NEED YOUR PITY!
ARE-ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE KING OF CHEV-RON?!
"HIS" ?!
I'M NOTHING BUT HIS PUPPET RIGHT NOW...
SO IT'S NOT LIKE BEAUTY IS REQUIRED ANYWAY.
WAIT-- THE KING'S AFTER ECO'S LIFEBLOOD, SO GRABBING ME INSTEAD OF HER MAKES NO SENSE.

OR... OR MAYBE SHE'S WORKING WITH SOMEONE? AND HER PARTNER'S AFTER ECO RIGHT NOW...?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRY TO ANSWER ANYTHING I TELL YOU.
JUST LISTEN UP.
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN THE ARENA TODAY...
YOU'LL BE SAFE RIGHT HERE.
?!
YOU'LL BE HERE FOR THE ENTIRE DAY.

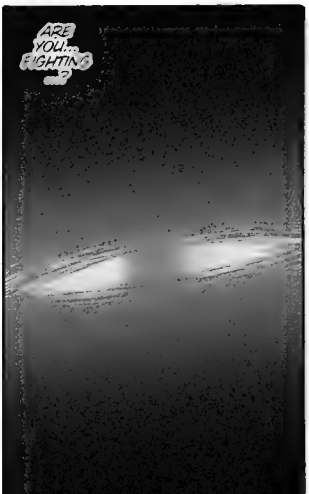
SAFE?! WHAT ARE YOU GOING ON ABOUT?!
DID YOU DRAG ME HERE...
TO KEEP ME FROM COMPETING AT ALL?!
BUT THE MATCH TODAY IS THE FESTIVAL'S GRAND FINALE!
EVEN OSCAR'S LOOKING FORWARD TO IT!
ARE YOU OKAY WITH RUINING IT FOR HER?!

MUTTER...
YOU IDIOT.
DO YOU THINK ANYONE'S MORE AWARE OF THAT THAN ME?
?!
HAH, I GIVE UP.
THIS LITTLE CHAT IS OVER.
CHAK
TALKING TO YOU THROWS ME OFF BALANCE.
!!!
CELE--

DAN-
GEROUS
TASTE...
SUCH
A
SWEET...
MMPH
...
WHAT...
WHAT'S
SHE
DOING...?
SOME-
THING'S...
IN MY
MOUTH...?...
!!
CLINK
ROLL...
Y-
YOU...
DRIBBLE...
GULP...

MY VISION'S... BLURRY...
AND MY HEAD...
LISTEN, ASHLEY.
NO MATTER HOW THIS GOES...
I WANT YOU TO...
KEEP BEING OSCAR'S FRIEND.
EVER SINCE SHE MET YOU...
OSCAR'S BEEN INVIGO-RATED.
ENOUGH TO MAKE ME JEALOUS, HONESTLY.
CEL... ES...?
GREAK

SO, I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE YOU SURVIVE ALL THIS...
MAGGOT.


ARE YOU... FIGHTING...?

WHAT THE HECK...

CELES... I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU.
TCH...
DROWSY...

MUMBLE...
ASH...
POU...
WE'RE GONNA... WIN TODAY...

DRAGONAR
ACADEMY

BUT THIS IS ALL I CAN DO FOR YOU.
I'LL PROTECT YOU.
Chapter LIX
Ashley's Imprisonment ②
SORRY ABOUT ALL THIS, ASHLEY.
.....

TCH ...!
ME, OF ALL PEOPLE, GETTING ALL LIGHT-HEADED OVER THIS?
I'M A PUPPET, NOTHING MORE.
THUMP
THAT'S RIGHT.
I'M A TRAI-TOROUS MAID.

FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME, DRESSING THIS DRABLY IS ONLY FITTING.
IN THE END, I TRULY AM NOTHING BUT A DESCENDANT OF PLUTO'S CHILDREN.
I HAVE NO RIGHT TO WALK YOUR PATH OF MIGHT AT YOUR SIDE, OSCAR. I NEVER DID.
ASHLEY...
NO, ASH BLAKE...
IF OSCAR HAS TO FLEE AS A TRAITOR ONE DAY...
I HOPE THAT YOU, AT LEAST...
WILL KEEP YOUR FAITH IN HER.
FLAP...

I HAVE NO IDEA!
WHEN I WOKE UP, HE WASN'T HERE, THAT'S ALL!

WHAT? ASH IS MISSING ?!
HOW COULD THAT HAPPEN ?!

ALL I COULD FIND WAS HIS SILVER WATCH...
LYING WHERE HE'D BEEN SLEEP-ING!

PRESI-DENT!!
AREN'T THESE HIS NIGHT-CLOTHES?!
AND THEY'RE STILL FAINTLY WARM.
NO. ASH TAKES THINGS TOO SERIOUSLY TO NOT LET US KNOW IF HE'D BE THIS LATE.
AND HE CERTAINLY WOULDN'T GO OFF SOMEWHERE WITHOUT ECO.
DO YOU SUPPOSE HE JUST NEEDED A LONG TRIP TO THE WASHROOM?
OR MAYBE HE WENT TO BREAKFAST EARLY?
CURIOUS THAT HIS UNIFORM IS STILL HERE, TOO.
IF HE'D DRESSED PROPERLY AND LEFT, HE WOULD HAVE HEADED TOWARD THE SCHOOL BUILDING, WOULDN'T HE?
AHEM! FOCUS, YOU LOVE-STRUCK BUNCH.
I KNOW YOU ALL HAVE FEELINGS FOR HIM AND WANT TO FEEL THAT TRACE OF HIS WARMTH, BUT DO TRY TO REMEMBER THAT THIS IS AN EMERGENCY, WON'T YOU?
TH-THMP
I-I-I WASN'T THINKING ABOUT THAT AT ALL!
AWW, YOU'RE TOTALLY RIGHT.O HEE HEE!
WH-WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU TWO?!
Y-YES.

HMM?
WHAT IS IT, ECO?
THAT'S ODD...
ALL OF ASH'S CLOTHES ARE STILL HERE.
SO... WHAT WAS HE WEARING WHEN HE LEFT?
YOU'RE RIGHT, THAT'S--
BAM
YOU-- ALL OF YOU!
HUH?! OSCAR ?!
HUFF... HUFF...

AND WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?!
HAVE ANY OF YOU SEEN CELES?! I'M LOOKING FOR HER!
AS IN, YOUR MAID?
UM.
SLOW DOWN, OSCAR.
START AT THE BEGIN-NING.
WHAT HAP-PENED?
SHE... SHE LEFT THIS NOTE, AND NOW SHE'S GONE.
.....!
HEY!! WHAT DOES IT SAY, HUH?!
"I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO FORGIVE ME."
WHAT? WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
HMM. I WONDER...
PRESI-DENT?
GIVEN THAT THEY VANISHED AROUND THE SAME TIME, SUGGESTING THAT THE TWO DISAP-PEARANCES ARE RELATED...
I THINK THERE'S A HIGH PROBABILITY THAT CELES ABDUCTED ASH.
Y-YOU THINK WHAT?!

WELL, I CAN'T IMAGINE ASH LEFT HIS ROOM NAKED...
AND IF CELES IF INVOLVED, THERE'S ONE OBVIOUS LINE OF REASONING.
WHICH IS...
THAT ASH WAS DRESSED AS A GIRL WHEN CELES TOOK HIM.
A... A GIRL ?!
BUT WHY WOULD SHE DO THAT?!
I HAVEN'T FIGURED THAT PART OUT YET.
HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN ?!
DOES THIS MEAN CELES HAS BEEN WORKING FOR LAFON HOUSE ALL THIS TIME?!
DID THE KING ORDER HER TO SEPARATE ASH FROM ECO OR SOMETHING ...?!

THE FINAL MATCH OF THE DRAGONARS' GUNNER BOUT IS TAKING PLACE THIS AFTER-NOON.
CELES' ABSENCE ISN'T A GOOD ENOUGH REASON FOR YOU TO WITHDRAW FROM THE TOURNAMENT... WHICH MEANS YOUR AGREEMENTS STILL STAND.
HUH? WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
NOT TO SOUND HARSH, BUT...
PRESI-DENT...
IN ORDER TO PREPARE, I PLAN TO SPEND THE AFTER-NOON...
IN THE STABLES WITH LANCELOT.
THAT WOULD MEAN I CAN'T HELP SEARCH FOR ASH, THOUGH. WILL YOU BE ALL RIGHT WITHOUT ME?
YES, THAT'S FINE. KEEP YOUR MIND ON THE FINAL MATCH.
I APPRE-CIATE THAT.
I'M GOING, THEN.
S-SYLVIA?! WAIT!
THAT'S AWFULLY COLD OF YOU!
ECO...
SAY WHATEVER YOU LIKE, BUT...

THE DRAGONARS' GUNNER BOUT IS A TREMENDOUS DRAGON RIDING EVENT. THE PRIDE OF OUR KNIGHTDOM IS AT STAKE.
AS A PRINCESS OF THE KNIGHTDOM, IT'S MY DUTY TO COMMIT WHOLEHEARTEDLY TO PREPARING AND REPRESENTING MY PEOPLE. IF I PERFORM POORLY, I BRING SHAME ON EVERYONE.
UM... BUT...

BESIDES, I HAVE EVERY CONFI-DENCE...
THAT ASH WILL BE BACK IN TIME.
WHAT'S MORE, HE'S SO EARNEST. IF HE THOUGHT HIS ABSENCE HAD HURT HIS OPPONENTS' CHANCES, HE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO BRING HIMSELF TO COMPETE WITH ALL HE HAS.

AND WE ALL PROMISED TO GIVE THIS EVERYTHING WE HAVE, DIDN'T WE?
SINCE I DEFEATED LUCCA, IT'S MY DUTY TO COMPETE TODAY.
I PLAN TO GIVE ASH THE FIGHT OF HIS LIFE LATER ON.
SO I'M LEAVING THIS UP TO YOU, ECO.
.....
MM-HMM. WE'LL ALL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO FIND HIM.
A-AS IF I WOULDN'T SEARCH FOR ASH AS HARD AS I CAN ANYWAY!
HE'S MY... MY...
GO GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT, SYLVIA. ALL RIGHT?
ANY-WAY!
OF COURSE I'LL FIND HIM! JUST WATCH!

HMPH! YOU SHOW ADMIRA-BLE SPIRIT...
YOUNG DRAGON ECO.
.....
ECO...
I'LL HELP YOU LOOK TOO. AFTER ALL, A MASTER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR SERVANT'S FAILINGS.
OSCAR, YOU...
yes!
ALL RIGHT, FINE!!
.....
Hmm...

ECO AND OSCAR, YOU TWO SEARCH FROM THE SKIES!! WE'LL GO BY LAND!!
IT'S SETTLED! I WANT EVERYONE ON THE STUDENT COUNCIL TO SPREAD OUT AND GET LOOKING!
BUT I CAN'T FIND HIM ANY-WHERE.
EASY FOR HER TO SAY...
I TRIED, BUT NO LUCK.
YOU CAN'T TRACE HIM USING YOUR ASTRAL FLOW?
QUIT BEING IMPRESSED AND THINK OF ANOTHER WAY TO FIND HIM, WILL YOU?!
GOOD TO KNOW.
AND EVEN THOUGH YOUR FORM AND SPEECH ARE THOSE OF A HUMAN, YOUR BOND WITH ASH FUNCTIONS THE SAME WAY AS THAT OF ANY OTHER DRAGON-HUMAN PAIR?
SO WHILE A RIDER CAN TRACK THEIR STEED THAT WAY, THE OPPOSITE ISN'T POSSIBLE, HMM?

OKAY, IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT FIRST, AND LOTS OF PEOPLE CAME, BUT IT WAS ONLY GIRLS.
BESIDES, IT TURNED INTO THEM ASKING YOU QUESTIONS, SO WE GOT ABSOLUTELY NO USEFUL INFORMATION.

AND HERE I THOUGHT I'D ALREADY PROPOSED A PLAN.
WHAT, YOUR "LET'S INTERVIEW EVERYONE!" NOTION?

AND I WAS QUITE PLEASED WITH MY SKETCH OF ASHLEY!
.....
WELL, I THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA.

NAVI COULDN'T HELP US EITHER.
ASH...

WELL, IT DOES LOOK JUST LIKE HIM.
I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT HE'S A BEAUTY, HUH?

THAT SILVER WATCH IS THE PROOF THAT YOU'RE A DRAGONAR ...!
HOW COULD YOU LEAVE SOMETHING SO IMPORTANT BEHIND? HOW COULD YOU LEAVE ME?
ASH, YOU BIG DUMMY...
I NEVER ENVISIONED A DAY LIKE THIS.

ASH...
JUST NOW...
ECO ASKED ME TO HELP FIND YOU.
BUT I TOLD HER I HAD NO IDEA.
JUST LIKE THAT, I BRUSHED HER OFF.

I EVEN WENT TO THE EFFORT OF CRAFTING A TEMPORARY BODY TO COME THIS FAR...
STROKE
THIS TRULY IS...
EVEN THOUGH, BEFORE YESTERDAY, THE VERY IDEA NEVER CROSSED MY MIND.
BUT FOR THIS MOMENT, DOING THIS IS THE ONLY THING I WANT.
A FIRST FOR ME.
"I... I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU, NAVI!"
"YOU'RE A DEAR FRIEND, RIGHT?!
THIS IS THE VERY FIRST TIME I'VE EVER WISHED MY FATE AS THE DRAGONWEISS WERE DIFFERENT.
AND IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT...

ASH.
PLIP
NGH ...!
NNH ?!
!!
HE CAN'T POSSIBLY BE RE-COVERING SO SOON--!
THE MEDICATION CELES DOSED HIM WITH IS POTENT ENOUGH TO LEAVE A HUMAN UNCONSCIOUS FOR HALF A DAY!
THE STRENGTH OF WILL IT MUST TAKE TO FIGHT THAT...

GRIP
NGH...
TNH...!
YOU CAN DO IT...
ASH!
I...
ASH, YOU...
UHHH...
I NEVER IMAGINED I COULD FEEL THIS WAY.
CAN YOU HEAR HOW FAST MY HEART IS BEATING...?

E... ECO ...?
ECO...
IS THAT... YOU...?
.....
SMILE
ふっ

THE NERVE.
MISTAKING ONE WOMAN FOR ANOTHER IS INCREDIBLY RUDE, YOU KNOW.
LURCH
!
N-NAVI ?!
I'M SORRY!
I-I'M SO FOGGY THAT I ONLY SAW YOUR HAIR COLOR, SO... SO I JUST THOUGHT...!
NO, NO, I'M NOT ANGRY.
BESIDES, I DID CRAFT THIS BODY TO RESEMBLE HERS.
WHAT MATTERS IS...
HOW ARE YOU FEELING? ARE YOU OKAY?
UM...
ARE WE IN THE DRAGON'S WORKSHOP AGAIN?
NO, WE'RE IN THE REAL WORLD.
HUH ...?! BUT...!

BE AT YOUR SIDE FOR THIS WHOLE DAY.
I WANTED TO...
I CRAFTED IT USING THE SAME PRINCIPLES AS THE MOTHER DRAGON USES FOR HERS.
BUT YOU HAVE A BODY--
I'M SORRY IF THIS SOUNDS HARSH, ASH, BUT PLEASE LISTEN.
THIS WHOLE DAY...?
AND YOU HAVEN'T RECOVERED NEARLY THE AMOUNT OF STRENGTH YOU'D NEED TO PARTICIPATE.
IT'S SCHED-ULED TO BEGIN SOON...
NGH...
I'M AFRAID THERE'S NO CHANCE AT ALL OF YOU MAKING IT BACK IN TIME FOR THE FINAL MATCH OF THE DRAGONARS' GUNNER BOUT.
HUH ?!

NO...! IF YOU COMPETED IN YOUR CONDITION AND LOST...
OSCAR WOULD TURN YOUR LIFE INSIDE OUT! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?!
REBECCA, THE PRINCESS-- THEY ALL WANT SO MUCH FOR THE FESTIVAL TO BE A SUCCESS...
HAVE TO GET THERE!
BUT...
BUT I STILL...
THROB
WE DON'T KNOW THAT FOR SURE.
BE-SIDES...
.....
I DON'T BELIEVE...
THAT OSCAR WOULD REALLY DO THAT.
IN PRACTICE, IT SEEMS TO ME...
THAT OSCAR IS BLUNT AND HONEST...
AND IS ALWAYS THINKING OF HIS COUNTRY...
AND OF THE WORLD.

BUT MOST OF ALL, THERE'S CELES.
THE FEELING I GET IS THAT SHE TRUSTS IN HIM MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE WORLD.
YOU SAY THAT, BUT DIDN'T SHE JUST BETRAY HIM?!
I KNOW I DON'T HAVE THE WHOLE PICTURE, BUT... I'M SURE SHE HAS HER REASONS FOR WHAT SHE DID.
.....
SO BASICALLY, YOU'RE SAYING THAT YOU'RE GOING TO YOUR MATCH NO MATTER WHAT...?
YEP.
IT'S STILL IMPOSSI-BLE.
IT WOULD TAKE HALF A DAY TO WALK TO THE ARENA FROM HERE.
WITHOUT A DRAGON TO TAKE YOU, THERE'S NO WAY TO MAKE IT!

I DON'T WANT YOU TO DIVE INTO A RECKLESS BATTLE.
I WANT YOU... TO SEE ME.
PLEASE, ASH...
CAN'T YOU LET IT GO?
NAVI ...?
JUST... JUST FOR NOW. THAT'S ALL.
I... ECO AND I...
COULD NEVER HAVE MADE IT THIS FAR IF YOU HADN'T BEEN THERE FOR US.
YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD FAITH IN ME, NAVI.
I'M SORRY.

AND MY STRENGTH HAS ALWAYS COME FROM FACING MY PROBLEMS HEAD ON, NO MATTER WHAT WE'VE FACED!
IF I GIVE UP HERE, THAT'S NOT ME ANYMORE!
YOU ALWAYS RECOG-NIZED THAT IN ME--BELIEVED IN ME!
IT'S FOR YOUR SAKE!!
ASH...
THAT'S TRUE.
IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF...
YOUR NATURE.

YOUR KINDNESS.
MY FEELINGS DON'T COME FROM YOU BEING THE KNIGHT OF AVALON, OR BECAUSE YOU'RE APPEALING.
THE DEPTH OF MY FEELINGS COMES FROM...
ALL RIGHT, ASH.
I'LL TELL YOU THE ONE WAY THAT YOU COULD CONCEIVABLY MAKE IT IN TIME.
!
AS A DRAGO-NAR...
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO USE AN ORACLE TO SUMMON YOUR STEED TO YOUR SIDE.
BUT EVEN IF YOU SUMMON ECO, SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO FLY IF SHE DOESN'T TAKE HER DRAGON FORM.
YOU DO HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT IT COULD COME TO NOTHING. ALL RIGHT?
OH! OF COURSE --!

THAT'S A LOVELY EXPRESSION, O KNIGHT OF AVALON.

IT DOESN'T MATTER !!
AS LONG AS ECO'S WITH ME...
I HONESTLY THINK ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE!

HUH ?!
NOW, WHERE IS YOUR BRIGHT DRAGON CRYSTAL?
YOU CAN'T SUMMON YOUR STEED WITHOUT IT.
OH...

WELL, UH...
SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN AWFULLY SHY ABOUT THAT TOPIC, SO... NO. SHE HASN'T.

OH NO--! I'VE NEVER HAD A DRAGON CRYSTAL!
GRACIOUS.
ARE YOU SAYING ECO'S NEVER GIVEN BIRTH TO ONE FOR YOU?

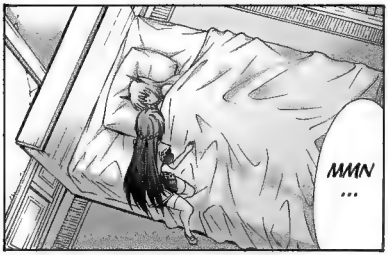
I SUPPOSE I HAVE NO CHOICE.
JUST THIS ONCE, I'LL DO YOU A SPECIAL FAVOR.

I...
WILL BIRTH ONE FOR YOU.
HUH ?!
BUT...BUT YOU'RE NOT A DRAGON, NAVI! SO HOW...?!
THAT'S TRUE. IT WOULD BE AS ARTIFICIAL AS THIS BODY IS.
BUT THE DRAGON-WEISS EMBODIES THE ENTIRE DRAGON TRIBE'S CREATIVE IMPULSES AND HISTORY.
I DO THINK I'D BE ABLE TO CREATE A SIMULACRUM THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH TO REAL.
WHAT'S MORE, I'LL IMBUE IT WITH EVERYTHING I PLANNED TO PASS ON TO ECO ONE DAY.
NAVI ...!
ALL RIGHT.
I BELIEVE IN YOU.
WHEN IT COMES TO OUR FATES, YOU'VE PRACTICALLY BEEN A STEED TO ME, TOO...
SO I FEEL SAFE LEAVING THIS UP TO YOU, TOO!

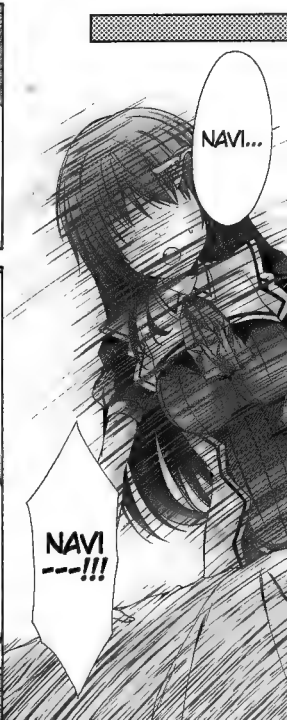
THANK YOU.
ALL RIGHT, THEN. TAKE MY HAND...
AND HOLD ME CLOSE, ASH.
THIS IS A LITTLE UNORTHODOX...
BUT JUST FOR THIS MOMENT...
YES, JUST LIKE THAT.
INDULGE ME IN THIS, EVEN IF IT'S A WEE BIT MEAN TO ECO.

NN-NHH...
TWITCH!
OH--!
AAA-AHH-...!
Y-YOU CAN DO THIS, NAVI---!!!
ASH...
AHHHHHHH!!!
FLAAASH

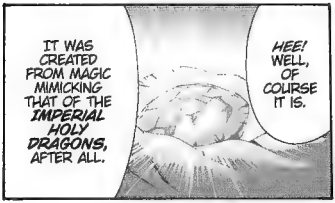
GLOOOW


MMN
...

I'M...
FINE...


NAVI...
NAVI
---!!!

HOW IS IT...?
IS IT... HEALTHY ...?


HEE! WELL, OF COURSE IT IS.
IT WAS CREATED FROM MAGIC MIMICKING THAT OF THE IMPERIAL HOLY DRAGONS, AFTER ALL.

YEAH, IT'S RIGHT HERE.
I NEVER IMAGINED IT'D BE SO BIG.

HEH HEH...
THAT FELT... WONDERFUL, ASH.

AND YOU SAVED ME AGAIN... NAVI.

I WANT YOU BY MY SIDE... AS MY KNIGHT.
RIGHT NOW... JUST FOR THIS MOMENT...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
NOW, THEN...
SHALL WE BEGIN?
to be continued.

AFTERWORD

It's me, RAN. Thank you so much, everyone who's picked up Dragonar.

As we can see, the battles in the Oscar arc have gotten pretty intense, and we've almost reached the showdown between Ash and Oscar. On the other hand, this volume's illustration stars Mirabelle. She's still a woman of mystery, so we haven't seen her doing anything huge yet, but she should be making her move soon! I hope to see you all again very soon.

RAN

A silvered-haired Mirabelle in a white gown. RAN is extremely fond of her.

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

DRAGONAR ACADEMY VOLUME 12

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DRAGONAR ACADEMY VOL. 12
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ISBN: 978-1-626925-29-8

Printed in Canada

First Printing: June 2017

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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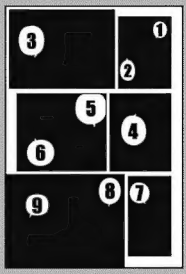
READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



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Ash Blake is a senior at Ansullivan Dragonar Academy, but he's not a typical student. Not only does he have the ability to ride any dragon, but his own Steed, Eco, was born with the body of a beautiful young girl rather than in the shape of a dragon!

In the 12th volume of this classic tale of dragons and magic, the Ansullivan 500-Year Festival is here at last! Everything is leading up to a showdown between Oscar—the student council vice-president, who dreams of one day taking the throne of Chevron—and Ash!

OLDER TEEN (16+)

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